
IOWAccess Project Design Phase Request

Project Name: Modernizing Child Advocacy

Requesting Agency: Iowa Child Advocacy Board, Department of Inspections and Appeals (ICAB)

Project Point(s)-of-Contact: Richard Moore, 515-242-5816

Project Sponsor: Richard Moore, 515-242-5816

Goal: To improve ICAB services to children and families; child welfare system officials; and the citizen volunteers who are the primary workforce of the ICAB programs (Local Citizen Foster Care Review Board members and Court Appointed Special Advocates - CASAs).

Project Purpose: To plan and implement enhancements to the information technology environment of ICAB in a manner that will: 1) decrease staff time and resources devoted to data entry and the receiving, copying, sending and storing of paper documents and program records; 2) increase the accessibility of ICAB volunteer application procedures, ICAB program-wide information and child welfare system assessments and reports to the general public, state and local policy makers and child welfare system officials; and, 3) improve the speed and accessibility of case-specific reports to the Court, DHS and other officials.

Background: ICAB is statutorily responsible for the Local Citizen's Foster Care Review Board and Court Appointed Special Advocate programs. Both programs recruit, train and support volunteers whose duties are to advocate for the best interests of children caught up in Iowa's child welfare system. In SFY2006, over 900 trained and certified volunteers were involved in these programs, almost 4,300 foster care administrative reviews involving 2,350 children in foster care were conducted and 1,380 abused and neglected children under the juvenile court's jurisdiction had a CASA volunteer assigned to them.

These programs are administered through a central state office with 14 local program offices. Program operations involve large volumes of Court records, DHS case file information, volunteer-generated reports, volunteer application and support forms and records and other information that ICAB receives, generates or stores as paper-only. Other than email messages, most information exchanges between ICAB staff and volunteers and system officials are paper-based. ICAB program monitoring and planning data are manually entered into data bases that are maintained at each local office with no real-time aggregation due to the lack of adequate electronic data transmission capacities. ICAB has no user-interactive website. ICAB's current IT environment is not structured to interface with current and emerging technologies and applications in the Judicial Branch and other Executive Branch agencies that could be used to increase efficiencies and otherwise improve services and outcomes.

Expected Results in this Project: The ultimate result of this project is expected to be improved safety and permanency outcomes for abused and neglected children being served by Iowa's child welfare system. Project-specific expected results include the development and implementation of a sequential plan to modernize ICAB's operations through the application of currently available technologies. Operational improvement results are expected to include: a general public accessible website that promotes public awareness of child advocacy issues and includes a volunteer recruitment and application function; a secure website accessible to ICAB staff, volunteers, DHS, Court and other officials designed to facilitate a variety of information exchanges; the establishment of document scanning capacities, electronic data storage protocols and a reduced reliance on paper-based information exchanges and retention practices; the establishment of a centralized ICAB program operations data system that allows real time updating and accessing by all local offices; business rules to control the security, storage, backup, and flow of data between the state and local office staff, volunteers and others; and, an ICAB capacity to facilitate and participate in future service oriented architecture initiatives and other multi-agency efforts to enhance the coordination and usefulness of data systems with connections to Iowa's child welfare system.

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Request: \$45,000 to support the design phase of a sequential plan to modernize ICAB's operations through the application of currently available technologies. Key deliverables of this design phase will include, but not be limited to:

1. Complete Use Cases/Process Flows
2. Complete Mock-ups (90 views)
3. Complete Data Model
4. Data Migration Plan
5. Document Management Integration Plan
6. Report Identification and Definitions
7. Implementation funding request

Interested Parties: ICAB staff; current and potential citizen volunteers; Court, DHS and other child welfare system officials and practitioners; state and local policy-makers.

Recipients of this Service: Thousands of child victims of abuse and neglect and their families, hundreds of citizen volunteers, and child welfare system officials and practitioners throughout the state.
